

Castle Rock State Park Preliminary General Plan

ADDENDUM

January 24, 2000

This document was prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation as an addendum to the Castle Rock State Park Preliminary General Plan, dated February 1999. This addendum reflects changes and revisions that will be made to the final general plan document, following its approval by the State Park and Recreation Commission. The final general plan will also be amended as necessary to correct or clarify information not shown below, as provided in the Existing Conditions section of the general plan. The underlined words indicate new or inserted text, and the strikethrough words are deleted.

Page 53, UNIT VISION

~~Castle Rock State Park becomes a place of spectacular scenic beauty—a natural area mostly unencumbered by human habitation or sensory intrusions. The park remains an integral component of the Santa Cruz Mountains ecosystem and its evolutionary processes, provides public access into this unique environment, and offers a place for visitors to enjoy and appreciate its inherent resource values.~~

Castle Rock State Park is a place of outstanding scenic beauty possessing the vestigial wilderness qualities of the Santa Cruz Mountains, linked through biocorridors with other remnant natural ecosystems of the region. A management philosophy of protecting wildness guides visitors through the scenic vistas, interesting vegetation, and unique landforms.

The park lands and adjacent open space appear as interconnected wildlands recovering from previous human use. The visitor's quest for open space and solitude are met through an integrated system of trails and protected natural areas. Encounters with the most significant park values intensify as visitors penetrate deeper into these forested canyons. An environmental ethic guides responsible behavior and minimizes visitor impacts on the natural systems. There is a heightened awareness of the significance and sensitivity of park resources and the effect recreation may have on the health of the ecosystem, with a recognition to preserve this area for future generations.

Page 59, Par. 1: Resource management program development and implementation is contingent upon the availability of funding. The Department should continue efforts to secure funding necessary for the success of this and other unitwide management programs.

Page 59, Guideline: The Department should cooperate with other landowners and regulatory agencies to address watershed issues affecting Castle Rock State Park. ~~A plan is needed for specific management actions intended to achieve watershed management goals.~~ The Department will develop a Watershed Management Program to remedy unnatural soil erosion and stream sedimentation problems within Castle Rock State Park.

Page 60, Guideline 1: The primary objective ~~should be~~ is to manage vegetation toward a natural condition with a minimum of disruption to natural processes.

Page 61, Guideline 2: California Black oak woodlands occurring at Castle Rock State Park ~~should~~ shall be considered as Special Plant Communities and their preservation ~~should~~ shall be a high priority in vegetation management.

Page 62, Guideline: The use of prescribed fire ~~should~~ shall be considered for ecosystem management in the park.

Page 63, Guideline 1: Suppression methods ~~should~~ shall cause the least resource damage commensurate with effective control.

Page 64, Guideline 1: Prior to any site development, heavy use activity, or prescribed burn, surveys for sensitive wildlife ~~should~~ will be conducted during the appropriate season for detection in areas that will be affected.

Page 64, Guideline 1: The Department will work with surrounding property owners and jurisdictions to reduce the numbers of non-native animals such as feral pigs, feral cats, cowbirds, bullfrogs, and starlings in the park.

Page 66, Par. 1: These differentially weathered features, including caves, spheroidal masses referred to as “cannonballs,” and lattice-like structures on rock faces and walls termed “fretworks,” are often very fragile ~~to the touch and can be easily damaged.~~

Page 66, Goal: Protect and preserve tafoni features, including caves, spheroid masses called “cannonballs”, and lattice-work rock walls and faces. The fossil and mineral record and specimens of Castle Rock State Park ~~should~~ will also be preserved.

Page 66, Guideline 1: Geological investigations ~~should~~ will be performed on sandstone outcrops where significant tafoni features are present in order to recommend and implement appropriate measures for their preservation.

Page 66, Guideline 3: In order to protect natural resource values, only low-impact recreational climbing (defined below) ~~should~~ will be allowed. A climbing management plan ~~should~~ will be developed that protects natural and cultural features, especially tafoni, and includes mitigation for impacts resulting from climbing.

Page 67, Guideline 1: Measures ~~should~~ will be taken to identify, record, and protect all significant prehistoric sites from adverse effects resulting from park use, development, resource management programs or natural processes such as erosion.

Page 68, Guideline 1: Measures ~~should~~ will be taken to identify and protect all significant historic sites and features.

Page 72, New Section: MANAGING RESOURCES AND VISITOR IMPACTS

It is recognized that any recreational use produces at least some impact, and that the Department needs to manage visitor impacts. Also recognized is the importance of providing and maintaining diversity in resource features and conditions of the park.

Goal: Apply processes and methods of visitor impact analysis to minimize resource impacts and maintain appropriate types and levels of visitor use within this unit.

Guidelines: In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prior to site specific development or preparation of management plans, the area of potential impact will be surveyed and reviewed by appropriate personnel and responsible agencies. Resource conditions will be periodically assessed and appropriate actions taken to maintain acceptable conditions and manage use accordingly.

Page 74, Par. 4: Castle Rock State Park has opportunities to provide a trail experience where access and low impact use remains a priority in future park management, and complements the preservation of wildlands and diverse resource values. ~~The amount of additional trails projected for the park is about 10 miles.~~

Page 79, New Guideline: Guidelines for Magnetometer Site: It is recommended that the Magnetometer Site, near Castle Rock Trail Camp, be interpreted for its own value as well as the role Russell Varian, early proponent of the park, played in developing it.

Page 81, Guideline 1: ~~Mobile food units should be considered for providing contract services to visitors of Castle Rock State Park, when operated in appropriate parking lot locations.~~

Page 81, Last Par: ~~Since it~~ It is not possible to predict all potential and compatible activities for Castle Rock State Park at this time. ~~Therefore, specific~~ Specific proposals ~~for new concessions to contract for services~~ will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Each proposal will be weighed against the purpose, vision, values, and spirit of the park as discussed in other sections of this plan.

Page 84, Natural Preserve Classification

Goal: Establish special protection and designation for sensitive plant and wildlife habitats and geologic features. ~~Provide a Natural Preserve classification of~~

~~approximately 1,800 acres of~~ in the upper San Lorenzo River and Kings Creek drainages, including the area known as Lion Caves.

The management intent is to establish approximately 1,800 acres in a Natural Preserve Classification, with a primary management philosophy to protect, preserve, and interpret significant resources, and promote natural processes. Sensitive plant communities, wildlife habitats, and geologic features will receive special protection. Visitor use will be carefully monitored and managed on a few trails through the natural preserve. These selective trails will be designed for access with the least impacts, allowing visitors an opportunity to experience the wildness and serenity of the park, without disturbing critical habitats.

Page 84, Guideline 2: The natural preserve ~~should~~ will be managed as a wildlands area where natural processes can occur without interference and which provides opportunities for scientific study of interpretive and educational values, where appropriate.

Page 84, Guideline 4: ~~However, where they present erosion and other problems, the~~ The old road alignments, where they present erosion ~~and other problems, should~~ will be surveyed and removed, and the native landscape restored.

Page 85, Par. 2: TRAVERTINE SPRINGS AREA

Travertine Springs is a small, unique area of the park that exhibits travertine mineral deposits issued from natural springs. The wetlands associated with the springs are equally fragile, supporting a tall grass meadow and stands of willow, bay, and hazelnut. This is the only place of occurrence of this rare and fragile feature in Santa Cruz County.

Goal: Maintain, protect and perpetuate the Travertine Springs area of Castle Rock State Park.

Guideline: The Department should develop and implement a specific area plan that provides for the protection and preservation of the Travertine Springs features occurring in the park.

Page 86, Insert after Goal:

Partridge Farm Area Land Use Management and Development

The management intent is that the Partridge Farm Area provide the primary access, contact, and orientation for visitors to Castle Rock State Park. For most visitors, this entrance area will serve as the main trailhead parking and transitional zone between the park's wildland areas and the urbanized setting from which they come. Management will establish a new park headquarters area on this site that provides basic visitor

services and information, with programs stressing park values and recreational opportunities. The open-air interpretive shelter will exhibit known natural and cultural features, and occasionally serve as an outdoor classroom. Overnight use will be considered in the form of walk-in campsites. However, day use and public contact facilities will be given a higher priority for implementation. New facilities will be esthetically designed to blend with their surroundings and respect the environment and its preservation. The entry experience for visitors to Castle Rock State Park, through Partridge Farm, will prepare visitors for a wildlands experience they will get when entering the trail system beyond.

Future management and use of the Partridge Farm Area will be guided through proper site planning and on-going evaluation of resource conditions, as well as understanding visitor and operational needs. The introduction of public access and use to this site will transform some of the current open space to developed parking, buildings, and outdoor use areas. However, the predominance of open space will be preserved and native vegetation reestablished to provide wildlife habitat and serve as a buffer between facilities and surrounding natural areas. Visitors can be oriented to the appropriate use areas and informed about the resource values and park rules and regulations. The Department will focus on mitigating visitor impacts in sensitive resource areas, establishing the initial public contact and operating functions, and improving access for people with disabilities.

An overall site plan will be prepared for the Partridge Farm Area, reflecting a phased approach to future development (see guidelines). This proposed change in land use will involve the design and construction of parking lots and entrance road in areas previously developed before the land became a state park. The design process will integrate facilities and vehicle and pedestrian circulation into the site with the least impacts on resources and surrounding activities. This site transformation and changes in the patterns of use will occur incrementally. The first phase of new parking at Partridge Farm will be managed for the primary visitor access and use of the Castle Rock Ridge area. Initially, any spaces retained in the existing parking lot will serve as a secondary access for trail use. Roadside parking will be removed along the highway outside both of these parking areas. The Partridge area parking will serve first time visitors and others coming to the park headquarters office, as well as for special events. Visitors will be directed to trailheads and designated perimeter parking areas, depending on their interests and need for visitor services. Ultimately, the goal is for Partridge to become the primary entrance and day use parking area, where visitor use can be effectively managed and resources protected.

Page 86, Guideline 1, fourth sentence: ...Day use parking, including overnight parking for trail camps, and visitor facilities should be provided to support program needs. These facilities will be located away from sensitive areas. Overnight use accommodations in the form of walk-in campsites may be developed for campers who want a less primitive overnight experience than provided by the existing trail camps.

Page 86, Guideline 2: Establishment of day use parking, walk-in campsites, and other facilities at Partridge Farm ~~should~~ will include an assessment of the ecological and social conditions for the adjacent areas of the Black Oak Woodland, Lion Caves, and Castle Rock Ridge Resource Management Zones. It is the goal to apply processes, ~~where feasible,~~ and methods of visitor management to minimize resource impacts.

Page 86 , Guideline 3, first sentence: With the guidance of resource inventories, studies, and review, an overall site plan ~~should~~ will be prepared for Partridge Farm...

Page 87, Guideline 1: Day use parking should be provided ~~(estimated at 50 to 100 cars),~~ , including support facilities, such as restrooms, potable water, and appropriate trails (Refer to Parking and Access Guidelines),. Walk-in campsites and overnight parking (estimated at 20 campsites and 30 cars), ~~should be developed.~~ A campfire center, ~~and an~~ outdoor visitor program area, and scenic overlook ~~should~~ may be considered for development. Development projects shall include restoration and protection of native vegetation and protection of cultural features.

Page 87, (This section (Overnight use of the Partridge Farm Area) will be removed from page 93, revised as indicated below, and inserted on page 87 before the Partridge House)

Overnight use of the Partridge Farm Area

The park was evaluated during the general plan process for its potential to create opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation, consistent with its resource values and classification. It was recognized that some park visitors enjoy a primitive type of recreational experience and would like extended hours of use. Others wanted campsites that were more accessible from the main parking lot.

It is also recognized that the provision for 20 walk-in campsites at the Partridge Farm area will not meet a significant amount of the demand for camping in the San Francisco Bay Metropolitan Area. However, it could provide an opportunity for statewide visitors to have the unique experience of camping on the Castle Rock Ridge and enjoying spectacular evening, nighttime, and morning hours. Currently, this is available only to those who can backpack 3 miles into the park or reside in the local community.

Goal: Expand access opportunities for visitors who may travel a greater distance or want to experience the park's environment during the morning and evening hours. Also, eliminate physical barriers and provide equal accessibility to all programs and facilities.

The management intent is to establish approximately 20 walk-in campsites in the Partridge Farm Area. The walk-in campsites, unlike automobile campgrounds, will not have vehicle parking next to each campsite, and visitors will be required to walk a reasonable distance from a common parking area to campsites situated in a more natural setting. Campsites and support facilities will be designed for accessibility in accordance with ADA guidelines, and sited with minimal impact on resource values.

Prior to facility development, a resource assessment will be implemented in order to direct management on development, use limitations, and public access to the Partridge Farm Area and its surroundings. The restoration and protection of the natural communities in the area will offset unavoidable impacts associated with any development. As well, there is a commitment to provide quality interpretation of the natural and cultural values therein. Such interpretation is intended to stimulate an awareness and appreciation by all park visitors to share in the protection and preservation of these resource values.

Guidelines:

- Provide a 20-unit campground facility that serves for a Approximately 20 walk-in campsites may be developed for a tent camping experience (not for conventional car-camping where users have ready access to vehicles). work out of an automobile or recreation vehicle). Campsites should would be set into a natural setting and connected accessible by trail to from developed parking and restroom facilities.
- Automobile parking should be screened with native plants and centralized or clustered away from the walk-in campsites.
- Restroom facilities should be small in scale and blended into the existing terrain and landscaped with native vegetation.
- Pathways connecting campsites to park trails shall guide users through the least sensitive resource areas.
- The design and layout of campground facilities shall consider compatibility with other uses (i.e., day use, operations, astronomy, reforestation, etc.) in the Partridge Farm area.
- Campsite provisions should be made for people with disabilities.
- Campsite installation will be based on a continual resource assessment along with mitigation measures prescribed for phasing facilities development at Partridge Farm.
- (New) Programs and development in the State Park System are currently guided by the ACCESS TO PARKS GUIDELINES document, dated May 1999, on file in the Human Rights Office of our Department. These guidelines are subject to continuous review and periodically updated as new information becomes available. Additional State and Federal guidelines may also apply.

Page 88, Par. 1: GUIDELINES FOR MULTIPLE AREAS

The management intent for wildland areas surrounding the Partridge Farm and proposed natural preserve is to preserve natural resource values, protect cultural sites and features and to provide access opportunities. Recreational activities will be managed and regulated to minimize visitor impacts on resources. Designated trailheads along State Highways 9 and 35 will be improved with upgrades in safety, services, and visitor orientation.

The following goals and guidelines pertain to the management and use of areas outside the natural preserve and the Partridge Farm Area; including rock climbing, parking and access, trail camps, and the protection of historic sites and features.

Page 89, Guideline 1: A Climbing Management Plan ~~should~~ will be prepared in coordination with the climbing community to establish appropriate guidelines for climbing that protect geologic features and significant natural and cultural resources.

Page 89, Guideline 4: The resources and recreational activities outside the natural preserve ~~should~~ will be managed with methods that ensure protection of significant resource values and that maintain compatibility with adjacent parkland uses.

Page 90, Goal: Relocate the park entrance and main parking area to Partridge Farm. Phasing will allow for monitoring resource impacts and changes in visitor use, and determining the appropriate management actions to minimize resource impacts. ~~to be taken.~~

Page 91, Guideline 2: The Department ~~should~~ will perform ~~specific~~ site investigations and resource assessments to determine appropriate management actions and recommended mitigation.

Page 91, Overnight Parking: Existing trail camps and walk-in campsites proposed at Partridge Farm ~~will~~ require an estimated 30 parking spaces for overnight use. Backpackers, or campers who drive to the main parking lot and hike into the park use existing trail camps. Currently, spaces in the main parking lot are allocated at nighttime for this purpose. The general plan guides the development and management of visitor parking and potential trail camp locations.

Goal: ~~Provide overnight parking for visitors who want to camp~~ overnight use areas.

Guidelines: Day use parking spaces in the existing or proposed parking lots may be allocated for overnight use of trail camps. The needs of resource management, trail camp users, and day use visitors should be considered in determining future parking lot capacities. The location and estimated number of parking spaces required by trail camp users depends on the total number of campsites and the use they receive. Management and use of all visitor parking is subject to change, based on resource monitoring and impact assessment programs.

Page 93, Guideline 1: Considerations for the amount and disbursement of visitor parking made available along both highways ~~should~~ will be included in establishing a basis for managing visitor use of the park.

Page 93, Remove all of this section from page 93 and insert it on page 87, with revisions and added text shown earlier:

~~Partridge Farm~~

~~Castle Rock State Park has limited sites that would accommodate the development of overnight facilities, other than for primitive back-packing trail camps. Partridge Farm is the only site of sufficient size and topography for multiple-use development with direct access from State Highway 35. It has relatively slight resource constraints, and is near the hub of future park operations. As the proposed headquarters for visitor services and staff activities, the Partridge Farm site provides the opportunity for campground surveillance and any night-time visitor contact, if needed. This surveillance would provide the visitors with a sense of security and allow staff the opportunity to overview the campground activity.~~

~~Goal: Expand access opportunities for visitors who may travel a greater distance or want to experience the park's environment during the morning and evening hours.~~

~~Guidelines:~~

- ~~• Provide a 20-unit campground facility that serves for a walk-in tent camping experience (not for conventional car-camping where users work out of an automobile or recreation vehicle). Campsites should be set into a natural setting and connected by trail to developed parking and restroom facilities located out of view from the campground.~~
- ~~• Automobile parking should be screened with native plants and centralized or clustered away from the walk-in campsites.~~
- ~~• Restroom facilities should be small in scale and blended into the existing terrain and landscaped with native vegetation.~~
- ~~• Pathways connecting campsites to park trails shall guide users through the least sensitive resource areas.~~
- ~~• The design and layout of campground facilities shall consider compatibility with other uses (i.e., day use, operations, astronomy, reforestation, etc.) in the Partridge Farm area.~~
- ~~• Campsite provisions should be made for people with disabilities.~~

- ~~Campsite installation will be based on resource assessment and monitoring along with mitigation measures prescribed for phasing facilities development at Partridge Farm.~~

Page 101, Par. 2: The general plan proposes facility development and changes, operational changes, resource management proposals and classification recommendations. The initial impetus for this general plan was the mitigation of impacts arising from existing activities and conditions. Nearly half of the park is proposed for a natural preserve classification. ~~Walk-in camping and day use parking will be developed at the Partridge Farm area.~~ Prescribed burning is proposed to reintroduce fire into the ecosystems, which will maintain and possibly expand native plant communities. The creation of a centralized visitor contact point at Partridge Farm will permit better visitor control and allow the provision of better public sanitation facilities. Revegetation with native plant species of the undeveloped portion of Partridge Farm will expand native plant communities, improve esthetics, and provide additional wildlife habitat. These actions will also provide mitigation for the impacts from the relocation of day use parking and the possible addition of camping at Partridge Farm. The park administrative function will be relocated to one of three possible locations...